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A
DISCOURSE
ON
Christian Perfection,
Etc.



Saligues de la Nalle
Finelon (7. de) Archbishop
of Cambrai.

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A
DISCOURSE
ON
Christian Perfection,
WRITTEN
To a Person of great Note,
BY THE
ARCHBISHOP OF CAMBRAY:
to which is added
A TREATISE
ON
Dejection or Lowness of
SPIRITS,
By the same Author.



Manchester,
PRINTED BY C. WHEELER & SON,
1800.

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Advertisement.

THE former of the following Treatises was first published in English about a century ago, and annexed to a work on *the Duties of the Great* written by the prince of Conti, which is now become exceedingly scarce, so that there is reason to believe the Treatise itself is little known. The latter is on a subject so

curious and interesting,
and written in a manner
so characteristic of the
pious and sensible Au-
thor, as cannot fail to
recommend it to the ju-
dicious and well-dispos-
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DISCOURSE, &c.



Christian perfection has not all those severities, that irksomeness, nor those restraints in it, that are commonly imagined. It requires indeed that we give up our selves wholly, and from the bottom of our hearts to God; but then every thing we do for his sake becomes easy. Those

who have entirely and without reserve given themselves up to God, are always contented; whatever he wills, they will, and are ready to do for his sake. They renounce all, and find the hundred-fold in thus emptying themselves, peace of conscience, freedom of spirit, pleasure in being placed within the arms of their God, joy in perceiving light daily springing up in their souls, liberty from the fears and tyrannical desires of the world. Such is the hundred-fold of

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bliss, which the children of God possess *even in this life*, if they but continue faithful to him. They make an entire sacrifice of themselves, but it is to him they love; they strip themselves, but 'tis of what they no longer love; they suffer, but it is their choice to suffer, and they prefer profitable sufferings to false delights: their bodies endure sharp afflictions; possibly their imaginations may be disordered, and their spirits may fail, but their wills continue calm, and in-

cessantly say *Amen* to all those stripes with which God chastises them for their sanctification.

God requires of us only a will that is not divided between himself and the creatures, a will that is pliant in his hands, which neither desires nor refuses any thing, which wills without exception every thing that he wills, and upon no pretence whatsoever wills what he wills not: When once we are brought to this disposition, every thing becomes profitable to us,

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and even the most useless amusements are converted into good works. Happy is he who gives himself up to God, he is set free from his own passions, and from the opinions of men, from their malice, and from the tyranny of their customs, from their poor and wretched raillery, from the misfortunes which the world ascribes to chance, from the unconstancy and unfaithfulness of friends, from the artifices and snares of enemies, from his own weaknesses, from the mi-

series and instability of life, from the horrors of an irreligious death, from the cruel remorse that attends criminal pleasures, and finally from the eternal condemnation of God. How can he but be delivered from that infinite number of mileries, seeing he has placed his will in the hands of God, and willing nothing but what he wills, finds amidst all his sufferings, his whole consolation in his faith and in his hope?

What weakness is it to be afraid of giving up

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one's self to God, or of engaging too far in a state so much to be coveted? Thrice happy those who throw themselves without reserve into the arms of the *Father of mercies, and God of all consolation*; as *St. Paul* speaks.— Then will they desire nothing but to know their duty, and fear nothing so much, as not to perceive what he requires; and when they discover some new light in divine things, they are transported with joy like a miser when he has

found a *hidden treasure*.

A true Christian in every misfortune which Providence lays upon him, wishes just that which happens to him, and nothing of that which he wants; for the more he loves God, the more contented he is, and the most sublime perfection, instead of making his yoke more weighty, renders it light.

What madness is it to be afraid of giving up one's self too much to God? that is, to be afraid of being too happy, to be afraid of having too

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much fortitude in the unavoidable miseries of life, too much consolation in the course of virtue, of being set too free from the tyranny of our passions, which make us miserable.

Let us then despise the things of this world to give up ourselves entirely to God. I say not that we are absolutely to throw them all up. When one is already engaged in an honest calling, let him but change the principle of his acting, and he will do much the same things out of love to God which

he did before. God never overturns the ranks and conditions of men, nor destroys the functions he himself has ordained. We then should do for the service of God what we now do to please men and to content ourselves: there would then be this happy difference only, that instead of being devoured by our pride, our passions, and the malicious censures of the world, we should act with freedom, with courage, and with hope in God; we should then

be enlivened with a generous confidence; and we should be supported by the expectation of those good things which shall never perish, which are advancing toward us, while the things of this world are continually sliding from us. The love of GOD, which would make us feel the love he bears to us, would give us wings to soar in the regions of joy and delight, and carry us on high above all our miseries. If we have any difficulty to believe this, our experience will soon

convince us of it. *Come, taste and see, says David, how gracious the Lord is.* When piety is built on its fundamental principle, the will of God, without consulting the taste, the constitution, or the fallies of an ungovernable zeal, Oh! how simple, sweet, easy, lovely, discreet, and free it is in all its steps! We live then much as others do, without affectation, without any shew of austerity, with complaisance and good manners, but in a constant observance of all our

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duty, renouncing continually every thing that does not from time to time fall in with the order of GOD, to whom we sacrifice all the irregular motions of nature. And this is that *worshipping in spirit and in truth*, which JESUS CHRIST says his Father requires. Every thing else is a religion of ceremony, and a mere shadow rather than the truth.

JESUS CHRIST tells us in general, *That we must take up his cross to be his disciples, and to*

follow him; that we must enter in at the strait gate; that we must do violence to ourselves to gain the kingdom of Heaven; that we must deny ourselves, hate ourselves; that we must not be conformed to this world, which is accursed, because of offences.

These truths frighten a great many, because they only know what this religion obliges them to do, without knowing what it makes them love; they see the cross it presents, but are altogether ignorant of that love it inspires them with

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which makes it light,
and know not that it
brings men to the high-
est perfection, by sensa-
tions which sweeten the
most toilsome labours.

Miserable are those
slothful and irresolute
souls, who are divided
betwixt God and the
world; they are rent in
pieces at once by their
passions and their re-
morse; they dread both
the judgments of God
and the opinions of men;
they abhor evil, and yet
are ashamed of good;
they suffer all the pains
of virtue, without tast-

ing of the pleasures:
 Oh! what peace would
 they not enjoy in the
 bosom of their God,
 had they but so much
 courage as to despise the
 opinions of men.

Oh! how dangerous it
 is for our salvation, how
 unworthy of rational
 creatures, how destruc-
 tive of our peace, to
 dwell within our own-
 selves for ever. Our
 whole life was given us
 for no other end, but
 that we might advance
 apace to our heavenly
 country. The world
 flies away like a trea-

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cherous shadow, eternity already advances to receive us, why linger we to march, while the day of mercy shines on us? Let us hasten to arrive at the kingdom of heaven.

The first commandment of the law is sufficient alone to overthrow in a moment all the pretences that can be made, for reserving any thing from God; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy might.* Observe how

many words the Holy Spirit joins together, to prevent any reserve which man would make in prejudice of that love, which requires every thing to be sacrificed to it : Behold a love jealous and commanding ; all is not too much for it ; there is but one only way of loving God sincerely, which is to make no conditions with him, but with a generous resolution to follow whithersoever he leads.

All those who are cautious and reserved in their affections, who

would love God for fear of punishment, but are willing to be a little deaf, when he speaks to them of renouncing the world and themselves, run a great hazard of being of thole *luke-warm* ones, whom JESUS CHRIST says he will *spue out*.

We are not truly reasonable but in as far as we consult the will of God, in order to conform our wills to it. This is the light we ought to follow, all other lights are deceitful. — Blind are they then who

think themselves wise,
and have not the wisdom of Jesus Christ. They run after phantoms in a profound darkness; they are like those who in a dream think themselves awake, and imagine all the objects in their dream to be real. Thus all the great ones of the earth, all the wise men of the world, all those who are bewitched with false pleasures, are deluded. There are none but the children of God who walk in the light of

pure truth. What is it that attends men of ambitious and vain imaginations? Often disgrace, always death, the judgment of GOD and a miserable eternity. These are the great and terrible scenes which advance and open to the view of irreligious men, yet they perceive them not: their policy can foresee every thing except the inevitable destruction of every thing they pursue. O ye blind, when will ye open your eyes to the light of Jesus Christ, which would dis-

cover to you the nothingness of all human greatness? They feel they are not truly happy, and yet they still entertain hopes of becoming so, by those very things which render them miserable. That which they want, torments them, that which they possess does not satisfy them; their sorrows are real, their joys short, vain and pernicious, and cost them more than they are worth. Their whole life is a constant sensible experience of their error; the eternal judgment is

already hanging over
their heads; their fan-
tastick joys are just
changing into everlast-
ing weeping and howl-
ing; their life is a sha-
dow just disappearing,
or at most, like a flow-
er, which in the morn-
ing blows and flourishes,
but in the evening,
fades, withers, and falls
to the ground.

- What is become of
those foolish worldlings?
ye might have seen them
at the hour of their death
cast down, trembling
and confounded; they
acknowledge their hav-

ing been miserably deceived, they deplore their fatal mistake, and even run from one extreme to another; for after having lived without any regard to religion, they become superstitious and cowardly at their death.

Is it not deplorable, that men will rather hazard their all for ever, than restrain their irregular inclinations, and yet nothing is more common. Remonstrate to them as much as you please, on the vanity and nothingness of their ex-

peccations, from the insufficiency of all created things. Observe to them the shortness of life, the inconstancy of friends, the deceitfulness of great offices, the unavoidable disquiets that attend them, the disappointments of their most refined projects, the emptiness of all the things they possess, the reality of all the things they suffer. How real and sensible soever all these observations may be, they only glance on the heart, they never pass the surface, the man is not in-

wardly changed. He groans to feel himself a slave to vanity, and yet does not shake off the slavery.

What must he do then to be set free from such a deplorable estate? He must pray to be inwardly enlightened, and then he will perceive the abyss of goodness that is in God, and the abyss and nothingness of evil, which is in the corrupted creatures: then he will despise himself, hate himself, distrust himself, forsake himself, and lose himself in the abyss of

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divine mercy. What a happy loss will this be, when he shall find himself without seeking himself in contemplating God; when he shall perceive the vanity of the world, which in a short time will vanish like smoke! All its grandeur and pageantry shall fly away; every high thing shall be brought low, all dominions crushed, and every haughty head humbled under the weight of the eternal majesty of God, in that day when he shall come to give judgment on

mankind. . . With one look only shall he extinguish everything that glitters in this our night, as the rising sun extinguishes the stars: we shall then behold nothing but God every where, so glorious will he appear: it will be needless to seek him, for we shall see nothing but him, whose boundless nature fills all things. Where are now, shall they then say, those fine objects that once so bewitched our hearts? Where are the marks of them? Where

was it we saw them?
Alas! there is not remaining the least footstep of the place where they once had been; they are gone like a shadow which the sun chases away, scarcely is it true that they have been, so true it is, that now they are not.

But suppose that this world was never to have an end, it will in a short time abandon and entirely forget you, do whatever you can; a little sooner, or a little later, in a small number of years, which will

disappear like a dream,
 your younger days will
 quickly pass over, the
 world will shift to the
 other side, and leave
 nothing behind but con-
 tempt and disgust for
 those who have not
 learned in time to des-
 pise it. The time is just
 at hand, it is already
 come, here it is: let us
 haste to prevent it, let
 us love eternal beauty
 which never grows old,
 nor suffers those to grow
 old who love nothing
 but it. Let us despise
 this accursed world,
 which already on all

fides is falling to ruin. Have we not seen, since ever we could make any observation, that all persons of the highest and most eminent ranks have been surprised by death. All have been swallowed up by the devouring gulph of eternity. There has risen up as it were a new world out of the grave of that which was in being when we first saw the light. As short as our life is, we must look out for new friends, having lost all our old ones. Here's no longer the same family, some

other unknown relations have come up in its place. We see even a whole Court disappear at once, others are now in the room of those we formerly admired, and come to dazzle us awhile in their turn. What is become of all those mighty actors who crowded the stage thirty years ago? is this then that world that so attracts us? where all our acting is just but to pass over the stage, and then make our *exit*. It is nothing but misery, vanity, and madness; or as *St. Paul* ex-

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presses it, *It is but the shadow of a figure that passes away.* O fleeting and foolish world! dost thou think to maintain thy credit with us for ever? what impudence is it in thee, to think to cheat us with such vain and empty phantoms? thou art nothing but a dream, and yet wouldst have us rely on thee: we feel, even whilst we enjoy thee, that thou hast nothing real to satisfy our desires. How darest thou give magnificent names to glorious miseries, and offer them to

us with such a smiling
countenance? why dost
thou amuse us with so
many agreeable vanities?
thou art just this moment
to disappear, and yet
darest to undertake to
make us happy. •



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FENELON,

ON

DEJECTION, OR LOWNESS OF
SPIRITS.

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AS to what regards a certain Lowness of Spirits, that contracts the heart and damps it, these two rules seem to me of importance. The first is, to remedy this lowness, by the means Providence furnishes: For example, not to overload ourselves with

toilſome affairs; that we may not fall under an unequal burthen. To huſband not only the ſtrength of the body, but even that of the mind; by not taking things upon ourſelves, in which we ſhould reckon too much on our own courage. To reſerve, always, hours for contemplation, for reading, for encouraging ourſelves by good converſations, even being gay; in order to unbend all at once, the mind along with the body, according to the occaſion.

We must, besides, have some sure and discreet person, to whom we may unbosom ourselves, about every thing that concerns not the Secrets of another, for this unloading eases and enlarges the oppressed heart.

Pains too long kept in, often swell, even to bursting the heart. If they could be extracted we should see that they do not merit all the bitterness they have occasioned.

Nothing draws a soul so much out of a certain

profound darkness, as the simplicity and lowliness, with which she exposes her discouragements at the expence of her glory, demanding light and consolation in the communion she ought to have among the children of God.

The 2d. rule is to bear peacefully all the involuntary impressions of dejection we suffer, in spite of the helps and precautions, we have been just now explaining.

The internal discouragements make us go

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more speedily than every thing else in the way of faith: provided they do not make us stand still; and the involuntary slackness of the soul does not deliver her up to this dejection, that siezes, as it were, by force, on the whole internal.

A step made in this state is always a gigantic one; it is more worth than a thousand made in a disposition more sweet and consoling. We have nothing to do then but despise our discouragements, and be always

going on, in order to render this state of weakness more useful and grand, than that of courage and the most heroic strength.

Oh! how deceitful is that sensible courage, that renders all easy; that does and suffers all, that is well pleased with itself for never hesitating. Oh! how it nourishes self-confidence, and a certain upliftedness of heart. This courage that sometimes wonderfully edifies the Public, nourishes within a certain satisfaction and

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testimony we render ourselves, that is a subtle poison. We relish our own virtue, are complacent in it, and well pleased with ourselves for its strength.

A soul weakened and humbled, that finds no longer any refuge in herself, that fears, that is troubled, that is sorrowful even to death, that cries out, in fine, as JESUS CHRIST did, when he was on the cross, Oh GOD! Oh my GOD! why hast thou forsaken me? is much more purified,

more loosened from herself, more annihilated and dead to all self-desire, than strong souls who enjoy in peace the fruits of their virtue.

Happy the soul that God casts down, that God bruises, from whom God has taken away all strength in herself, that she may no longer support herself, but in him that sees her poverty, that is content with it, that bears, besides the crosses without, the great internal cross of discouragement, without which all the

others would weigh nothing.

*On DISSIPATION and
DEJECTION of Mind.*

1st. You are in pain about two things, the one to shun dissipation, and, the other, to support yourself against dejection; for dissipation, you will never cure yourself of that, by forced reflections. Hope not to perform the work of grace by the means and industry of nature. Content yourself with

giving your will to God without reserve; and when the thoughts of any state of pain come into your mind, always think on it so, as that you would accept of it, by an abandoning of yourself to his divine providence.

Take great care never to go to meet these thoughts of the cross: But when God permits them to come upon you without your having sought for them, never let them pass without fruit.

Accept, in spite of the reluctances and horrors of nature, whatever God presents to your mind, as a trial by which he might exercise your faith: do not put yourself at all in pain to know if you shall have strength to execute in the occasion, what at a distance you desire to do. The occasion when present will have its own grace, but the grace of the moment, in which you think of these crosses, is, heartily to accept them,

at the time God shall give you them.

This foundation laid ; walk on, in tranquillity, and confidence. Provided this disposition of your will be not changed, by voluntary attachments to something against the order of God, it will subsist always.

Your imagination will be wandering, on a thousand vain objects. It will, even, be more or less agitated, according to the places you are in, and according as it is more or less disordered by objects, more

striking, or languishing. But, what then? The imagination, (as St. Theresa says,) "is the "fool of the house: she "never ceases making "noise and shining." The mind itself is drawn away by her. It cannot help seeing the objects she presents to it, its attention to images is unavoidable, and this attention is a real straying, but, provided it be involuntary, it never separates us from God: It is only the straying of the will that does all the harm.

If your will never concur to your straying, you never will stray; and it will be the truth to say of you, your contemplation has never decayed. Every time you perceive your straying, let it fall, without combating it; and, return gently to the side of God without any struggle of mind.

When you are not sensible of this straying, it will not be a straying of the heart. As soon as you perceive it, lift up your eyes towards God. The fidelity you

have in re-entering his presence every time you are sensible of your state, will make you desire the favour of a more frequent presence. And this, if I am not mistaken, is the way to render this presence very soon familiar.

This ready fidelity to turn away from other objects, every time the straying is observed, will not be long in a soul without a frequent and easy recollection. But it must not be imagined we can enter into this state by efforts of our

own; such a struggling would render you constrained, scrupulous, uneasy in the affairs and conversations where you have occasion for being free. You would be always in fear lest the presence of God escaped you; always running to recover it, you would be enveloped in all the phantoms of your imagination.

Thus the presence of God, that ought, by its sweetness and light, to facilitate our application to all other objects we have occasion to confi-

der in the order of God, would render you, on the contrary, always in agitation, and incapable of the external functions of your condition.

Never be uneasy then that this sensible presence of God has escaped you; but, above all, be much upon your guard, against desiring a presence of God, supported by reason and reflections.

Content yourself, in the course of the day and detail of your occupations, with a general and confused view of

God; in such sort, that, if it were asked you then, what is the disposition of your heart? It would be the truth to say, it attended to God, although you were then attentive to some other object.

Do not put yourself at all in pain for the wanderings of your imagination, that you cannot command. We stray often from fear of straying, and after that, from regret of having done it.

What would you say of a man, who, on a

journey, instead of going on always without stopping, should spend his time in foreseeing the falls he might make? And, when he had made any one, in returning to see the place where he had fallen?

Go on, go on, would you say to him. I say the same to you; go on, without looking behind you; and, without stopping; walk, says the Apostle, that you may the more abound. The abounding of the love of God will correct you more than your own in-

quietudes and frequent
returns on yourself:
This rule is simple; but
nature, accustomed to do
all by sentiment and re-
flection, finds it simple,
even to excess.

We would assist our-
selves and give ourselves
more spring, but 'tis in
this the goodness of the
rule consists, that it
keeps us in a state of
pure faith, where we
support ourselves on
God alone; to whom
we abandon ourselves,
and where we die to
ourselves, by suppressing
whatever is of self.

By this we do not multiply external actions, that might constrain persons very much employed, or hurt their health. We turn these actions all to loving, but, to loving simply, thus we are never overloaded. For we bear only what we love: this rule, taken right, is sufficient also for curing Dejection.

2d. DEJECTION, or MELANCHOLY, proceeds often from this, that when seeking God, we do not feel him enough, to be content;

the desire of feeling him, is not the desire of possessing him: But it is the desire of being assured, for the love of ourselves, that we possess him, in order to our own consolation.

Nature, damped and discouraged, is impatient to draw self from pure faith, where she wants all support; she is, in that state, as in the air. She would feel her own advancement.

At the sight of our faults our pride frets; and we take this fretting

of our pride for a sentiment of penitence.

We would, from self-love, have the pleasure of seeing ourselves perfect: we chide ourselves for not being so. We are impatient, haughty, and out of humour at ourselves and others: Deplorable error! as if the work of God would be accomplished by our chagrin! as if we could unite ourselves to the God of peace by losing our peace within.

Martha! Martha! why art thou troubled about so many things for the

service of Jesus Christ?
 One only is needful, to
 love him, and keep at-
 tentive to his feet.

When we are entirely
 abandoned to God, all
 is done, without doing
 any thing. We let our-
 selves be conducted with
 confidence, for what is
 to come. We will, with-
 out reserve, whatever
 God shall will; and we
 shut our eyes that we
 may foresee nothing:
 We apply ourselves,
 however, in what is
 present, to accomplish
 his will.

Sufficient for every

day is its own good and evil. This daily accomplishment of the will of God, is the coming of his kingdom within us, and, at the same time, our daily bread.

We would think ourselves infidels, and guilty of a Pagan distrust, if we desired to penetrate into the futurity that God conceals from us. We leave it to him. It is his to make sweet or bitter, short or long: Let him do what is good in his own eyes.

The most perfect preparation for his futurity,

whatever it be, is to die to all wills of our own, that we may wholly give ourselves up to that of God.

As manna had all tastes, this general disposition contains all graces, and all sentiments, suitable to all states, God may place us in hereafter.

gd. When we are thus ready for all, it is in this bottom of the abyss we begin to take footing, we are as calm about the past as about the future.

We suppose of ourselves all the worst we

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can; but we throw ourselves blindly into the arms of God; we forget ourselves; we lose ourselves; and this is the most perfect penitence, this oblivion of ourselves: For all conversion consists only in renouncing ourselves to be employed in God. This oblivion is the martyrdom of self-love; we would love a hundred times better to contradict, condemn, torment ourselves, mind and body, than forget ourselves.

This oblivion is an

annihilation of self-love, in which it finds no refuge; then the heart enlarges; we are eased by unburdening the whole weight of ourselves, with which we were oppressed. We are astonished, to see how straight and simple the way is. We believe, there was occasion for a continual struggle, and always some new actions. On the contrary, we perceive, there is little to do; that it is sufficient, without reasoning, either on the past, or the future, to

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look on God with confidence, as a good father, who leads us, in the present moment as by the hand.

If by any straying of the mind, we lose sight of him, without stopping at this, we turn again towards him from whom we had wandered. If we commit faults, the penitence we have for them is all of love; we turn again towards God; and he makes us feel what is his will.

The sin appears hideous: but the humiliation rising from it, and for

which God has permitted it, appears good.

As much as the reflections of pride on our own faults are bitter, restless, and chagrine us, so much is the return of the soul to God, after its faults, recollected, peaceful, and supported by confidence.

You will find, by experience, how much this simple and peaceful return will facilitate your correction, more than all your vexations for the faults that prevail on you.

Only be faithful in

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turning yourself, with simplicity, towards God, the moment you perceive your fault; it will be in vain for you, to chicané with yourself; it is not with yourself you ought to take your measures. When you torment yourself about your own miseries, I see no body in your council, but you alone with yourself; poor council! in which God is not.

Who will reach out his hand to help you out of themire? will it be you? Ha! tis you yourself who are sunk into it, and

cannot get out: besides,
this mire is yourself;
the whole source of your
misfortune, is, you cannot
get out of yourself:

Do you hope to get
out of it by conversing
always with yourself?
and nourishing your sensibility,
by the sight of
your weaknesses? you
do nothing, but increase
your tenderness for
yourself, by all these
returns. But the least
view of God would
calm your heart, disordered
by your being thus
busy about yourself: his
presence works always

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the going out of ourselves; and, this is what we want. Go out of yourself then, and you will be in peace: but, how shall we go out of ourselves? we need only turn gently, on the side of God, and form, by little and little, the habit of it, by our fidelity in returning to Him, every time we perceive ourselves strayed.

As for the natural dejection occasioned by melancholy, it proceeds only from the body; thus, regimen and medicines diminish it.

It is true, it always returns; but it is not voluntary. When God gives it, we support it in peace, as the fever, and other bodily disorders.

The imagination is in a profound darkness; it is all hung in mourning; but the will, that is nourished only by pure faith, is well satisfied to undergo the trial of all these impressions: thus, we are in peace; because immediately we are with ourselves, and resigned to God.

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what we feel, but what we will ; we will whatever we have ; we will nothing of what we have not ; we would not be delivered by ourselves, from what we suffer, because it belongs only to God, to distribute crosses and consolations : We are in joy, amid tribulations, as the Apostle says, not a joy of the senses, but a joy of pure will.

The impious, amid their pleasures, have a constrained will, because they are never content with their condition.

They would drive away certain disgusts, and taste still some pleasures they want.

On the contrary, the faithful soul has a will constrained in nothing ; she accepts freely every kind of pain God gives her. She wills it, she loves it, she embraces it, she would not quit it, even though it cost her but a single desire ; because, that desire would be a selfish one ; and contrary to her abandon to providence, which she will never prevent, in any thing.

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If any thing is capable of setting the heart at large, and making it free, it is this Abandon. It diffuses in the heart a peace, more overflowing than the rivers; and a justice, that is as the depths of the sea, (an expression of Isaiah.) If any thing can render a man's mind serene, dissipate its scruples and its dark fears, soften its pains by the unction of love, give him a certain vigour in all his actions, and shed the joy of the Holy Spirit, even on his countenance, and in his

words ; it is this simple, free, and child-like conduct, in the arms of God.

But, we reason too much, and hurt ourselves with reasoning ; there is a temptation to reasoning we must be afraid of, as of other temptations.

There is an occupation about ourselves, nice, restless, and distrustful ; which is a temptation so much the more subtle, that we do not look on it as one ; and that on the contrary, we sink into it, more and more ;

because we take it for the vigilance commanded in the Gospel.

4th. The vigilance **JESUS CHRIST** enjoins, is a faithful attention to love always, and accomplish the will of **GOD**, in the present moment, according to the signs we have of it; but it consists not in troubling and putting ourselves to the torture; and being incessantly employed about ourselves, rather than lift our eyes towards **GOD**; from whom comes our only help against ourselves.

Why, under pretence of vigilance, will we be obstinate to discover in ourselves, what it is not the will of God we should see, during this life? why lose, by that, the fruit of pure faith, and inward peace? why turn away from the presence of God, which, it is his will to render continual to us? He has not said, be yourselves always the object before which you shall walk; but, he has said, walk before me, and become perfect:

David, full of his spirit, has said, I saw God always before me, and again, my eyes are always lifted towards the Lord, that he may guard my feet from the nets; the danger is at his feet, his eyes however are on high. It is less useful to consider our danger, than the assistance of God: beside, we see all reunited in God. We see, there, both human misery, and the divine goodness. A single glance of a soul upright and pure, be it never so simple, per-

ceives all in this infinite light.

But, on the contrary, what can we see in our own darkness? except, our very darkness. O, my God! provided I never cease to see thee, I shall never cease to see myself, in all my miseries. And I shall see myself much better in thee, than in myself: true vigilance is, to see in thee thy will, that I may accomplish it; and, not reason, without end, on the state of my own.

When external occupations hinder me from

seeing thee alone, by
 shutting, in contempla-
 tion, the avenues of my
 senses; yet, even then,
 at least, I shall see thee,
 O LORD, doing all in
 all.

I shall every where
 see, with joy, thy will
 accomplished, both with-
 in me, and without. I
 shall incessantly say, A-
 men; as the blessed. I
 shall always sing in my
 heart, the song of the
 celestial Sion. I shall
 bless Thee, even in the
 wicked, who, by their
 bad will, accomplish still
 in spite of themselves,

thy will, all just, all
 holy, and all powerful.
 In the chaste liberty of
 the spirit, Thou givest
 thy children, I shall act
 and speak in simplicity,
 chearfulness, and confi-
 dence. " Tho' I pass
 ' through the shades of
 ' death, I will fear no-
 ' thing; for Thou art
 ' always with me. I
 ' will never seek any
 ' danger; never enter
 ' into any engagements,
 ' but with signs of thy
 ' Providence; that they
 ' may be my strength
 ' and consolation in it;
 ' even, in the states,

' where thy call will
 ' support me, I will give
 ' to recollection, con-
 ' templation and retire-
 ' ment, all the days, the
 ' hours, the moments,
 ' Thou shalt leave me
 ' free. I will never quit
 ' this blessed state, far-
 ' ther than Thou shalt
 ' call me, Thyself, to
 ' some external func-
 ' tion: then, I will go
 ' out of Thee, in appear-
 ' ance; but, thou wilt
 ' go out with me, and,
 ' in this apparent out-
 ' going, Thou wilt carry
 ' me in thy bosom. I
 ' will not seek myself,
 ' in my commerce with

' the creatures. I will not
 ' be afraid lest recollec-
 ' tion diminish my agree-
 ' ableness among them,
 ' and make my conver-
 ' sation dry: for my will
 ' is not to please them,
 ' farther than I must do
 ' it, to please Thee.'

' If thou wilt make
 ' use of me, for thy work
 ' on them, I surrender
 ' myself, and without
 ' reflection on myself,
 ' will, in simplicity,
 ' pour forth on them,
 ' whatever of thy gifts
 ' Thou hast made to flow
 ' on me. I will not walk
 ' groping, by falling al-
 ' ways back on myself,

' However dangerous
 ' and dissipating this
 ' function may be, I will
 ' behave myself in sim-
 ' plicity before Thee,
 ' with an upright inten-
 ' tion; knowing how
 ' good the Father is, be-
 ' fore whom I walk;
 ' and that He desires no
 ' subtilty in his own.'

' If on the contrary,
 ' Thou wilt not make
 ' use of me for others, I
 ' will not offer myself. I
 ' will not go before, in
 ' any thing. I will do,
 ' in peace, the other
 ' things, to which Thou
 ' hast bounded me,
 ' for, according to the

' attraction of the state
 ' of Abandon Thou hast
 ' given me, I desire,
 ' nor refuse nothing. I
 ' am ready for all, and
 ' I consent to be useful
 ' to all.'

' Sought for, rejected,
 ' known, not known,
 ' applauded, inveighed
 ' against, what is it to
 ' me? 'tis Thee I seek,
 ' and not myself; Thee,
 ' and not thy gifts; dis-
 ' tinguished from Thee
 ' and from thy love, all
 ' conditions are indiffer-
 ' ent to me.'

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